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**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Hertfordshire Community Opportunities**

We are writing to keep you updated about the review of community opportunities in Hertfordshire. These include voluntary and private sector day and leisure activities for adults with disabilities that are funded by Hertfordshire County Council. It does not however include the day services provided by the County Council.

At present, contract arrangements for community opportunity providers supporting adults with disabilities are due to end in March 2020. To comply with our legal duty, Hertfordshire must run a tender process for new contracts. Services purchased under Direct Payments are not part of the procurement process but will be considered as part of our review.

During recent years, Adult Care Services (ACS) has been engaging with community based organisations to look at how we can improve the way we contract day opportunities for adults with disabilities across the county in order to better meet the needs of individuals and support carers.

Following previous engagement work with people and communities and after reviewing the approaches being taken by other local authority areas and the current contracting model in Hertfordshire, we have discussed some initial ideas with providers and we are continuing to work with them to develop those further.

Whilst there will be potential changes to the way Hertfordshire contracts with providers going forward, the council is committed to minimising the impact of any change on people who are currently attending services.

Please note that this review relates to external organisations only – as noted above the day services run by Hertfordshire County Council are not part of this process, but we are working closely with them to ensure that all future services align.

Enclosed is a Q&A with further information about the review and procurement process.

Hertfordshire County Council will be running sessions in partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire for carers. In these sessions we hope to have conversations with you about how we want to work with providers, and about what types of service we need to develop so we are better able to offer the right support. The sessions will also give us all the opportunity to look at any questions and thoughts you have about this process.

Session dates:

- 5<sup>th</sup> September, 10:30am to 12:30pm, followed by lunch at the Stanborough Centre, 609 St. Albans Road, Watford, Herts, WD25 9JL
- 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at Priory Hall, Ware Priory High Street, Ware Herts, SG12 9AL - 10.30am – 12.30pm followed by lunch

Please let us know if you are planning to attend, by booking your place with Carers in Hertfordshire – either email [contact@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinherts.org.uk) with the subject title CommunityOps or telephone their office on 01992 58696.

If you have any questions or would like to let us know any additional areas you would like to discuss with us, please email [gemma.brace@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.brace@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

We have asked a number of organisations to help us to send this letter out to parents/carers as we want to make sure that we reach as many people as possible. Apologies if you receive more than one copy.

Yours sincerely



**Gemma Brace**  
**Commissioning Manager**  
**Adult Care Services**

## **1. What are Community Opportunities?**

Community Opportunities will be the umbrella term to encompass Day Opportunities, Day Care, and Day Service arrangements. They will cover both activities in dedicated settings (e.g. day centres) and support/activities that take place in communities. This includes individual (1:1) and group- support.

Community Opportunity providers in Hertfordshire support adults to achieve their personal goals in a number of ways, these include:

- ✓ progressing skills needed to be independent or more independent, such as cooking
- ✓ developing life skills, including communication and relationships
- ✓ training for employment and seeking employment
- ✓ support with college or further education
- ✓ doing things with friends and getting out and about
- ✓ personal care

## **2. Why are we reviewing community opportunities?**

We are reviewing the current offer of community opportunities for the following reasons:

- a) Findings so far showed that people want more choice and different service offers including evenings and weekends, especially young people who want support into employment (where appropriate). At present this offer is limited.
- b) Connected Lives: Services need to align with the new Connected Lives assessment framework, making it easier for people and professionals to access the right service at the right time
- c) Current contract arrangements: All current contracts with providers are ending in 2020.

## **3. What support will be offered by Community Opportunity providers?**

Support will include some or all of the following:

- ✓ developing activities and services listening to the wishes of individuals who use services
- ✓ enabling individuals to access activities in their community
- ✓ supporting individuals to find and remain in employment or volunteering
- ✓ empowering individuals to develop skills to maintain their independence
- ✓ providing support in a safe environment that provides suitable respite to carers through meaningful activities

#### **4. Our plans: what we need to do**

- ✓ Understand and plan with providers what services people want and where we need them
- ✓ Complete a procurement process to comply with legal requirement
- ✓ Set out clear quality standards for care and support in Community Opportunities
- ✓ Agree a list of providers that can offer good quality care and support services in Community Opportunities
- ✓ Encourage providers to develop current services to include:
  - Support in to employment
  - Maintaining employment
  - Support for adults with physical disabilities
  - Support for adults with Autism